



Roy Cooper North Carolina Attorney General

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SBI investigates Durham teacher for sharing child porn online

Durham: The State Bureau of Investigation Computer Crimes Unit is investigating a Durham teacher suspected of sharing child pornography over the Internet.

Through an undercover investigation online, SBI agents identified an Internet address sharing more than 1,800 images of suspected child pornography. Undercover work and subpoenas linked the Internet address to Willem J. Pet, age 61, of Durham.

The SBI and Durham Police served a search warrant last week on Pet's residence where they seized computer files and other records for forensic analysis. A copy of the search warrant, returned Monday to the Durham Clerk of Court, is attached.

Federal charges against Pet are likely. The suspect is currently a teacher at Southern Durham High School.

The SBI first discovered Pet's suspected online activities while conducting training for local law enforcement in how to catch Internet predators and child pornographers.

"Our SBI computer crimes experts work tirelessly to track down criminals and protect children," said Attorney General Roy Cooper. "We're also working to train more local officers to go online and catch these criminals so they can't hurt our children."

The SBI Computer Crimes Unit heads the NC Internet Crimes Against Children task force, which includes 70 law enforcement agencies across the state, and also works with the national ICAC task force on child exploitation cases that cross state lines.

The SBI also trains local law enforcement agencies across the state to conduct undercover investigations online.

"We've toughened our laws against child predators and pornographers and added more investigators to root them out," Cooper said. "We'll keep pushing for more help for law enforcement to fight crime online."

New state laws which Cooper helped win this year strengthened penalties for possession, dissemination and production of child pornography. The measure also increased the penalty for predators that solicit children over the Internet and then show up at a meeting place to assault a child.

The new law also bans convicted sex offenders from social networking sites where children are members and requires social networks to take reasonable steps to keep North Carolina sex offenders off of their sites. Cooper has led a group of attorneys general from across the country to get MySpace and Facebook to make their sites safer and to protect children from predators and pornography.

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